

PRESS RELEASE

Recent BIR World Recycling Convention (Round-Table Sessions) in Amsterdam (24-25 October 2016)

World Council of Recycling Associations:

World joins in welcoming “United Nations of Recycling”

Brussels, 26 October 2016

From around the globe, recycling industry leaders converged on Amsterdam to be present at the inaugural meeting of the World Council of Recycling Associations on October 24. This BIR-led initiative is intended to take participants to “the next level of sustained co-operation and support for the industry”, attendees in the Dutch capital learned from BIR President Ranjit Baxi of UK-based J&H Sales International.

The World Council, also dubbed “the United Nations of Recycling” by Mr Baxi, has been created to give a unified voice to the international recycling industries in their bid to develop awareness among policy-makers, legislators and the general public of the economic, social and environmental contribution of the recycling industry. The Council will also help promote “best sustainable practices” around the world - particularly in developing countries, he added. “It will work as a thread to help them build on their recycling programmes.”

Worldwide, the recycling industry is responsible for creating millions of jobs as well as a cleaner, healthier and more sustainable planet, Mr Baxi explained. The World Council will therefore spearhead the drive for further academic studies and research that will provide factual and statistical confirmation of the recycling industry’s contributions to, for example, GDP, employment and landfill reduction. A recently-updated, BIR-commissioned study had revealed that the work of the recycling industry prevents some 700 million tonnes of carbon emissions annually, and Mr Baxi added: “More such reports are necessary. We need to quantify these benefits.”

In addition, the World Council will promote free trade in recyclables as well as the environmentally sound management and use of recycled materials, while encouraging

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manufacturers to design their products with a heightened focus on recycling. It will also co-ordinate actions in defending the interests of the industry as a whole.

With a membership comprising 800 member companies and 35 national recycling federations, the BIR is the ideal organisation to lead such an initiative, it was agreed in Amsterdam. Mark Lewon, Chair of the US Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, said the increased level of co-ordination delivered by the World Council “will make the position of the industry much stronger”. According to Salam Sharif, President of the Bureau of Middle East Recycling, a unified approach is the only way to convey the industry’s positive messages in a world moving from a linear to a circular model.

The World Council is “very necessary” and has a particularly important educational role to play, stated Sanjay Mehta, President of the Metal Recycling Association of India. And Dominique Maguin, President of the European Recycling Industries’ Confederation, underlined the importance of “sharing our views and defending the interests of the industry we represent”.

Messages of support for the World Council were also delivered first-hand in Amsterdam by recycling industry leaders from China, Canada, Spain, the UK and Romania.

Also under the World Council umbrella, Mr Baxi highlighted progress towards his stated goal of creating a Global Recycling Day. This initiative is intended to increase the profile and awareness of recycling worldwide while underlining the contribution of the recycling industry towards safeguarding “the future of our planet”. While it had been hoped to launch this annual “celebration” of recycling in 2017, the process of establishing such an event is highly complex and is therefore likely to take a little longer than originally targeted, Mr Baxi confirmed.

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